

month they sell a variety of products, ranging from tables and chairs to expensive sets of furniture, with a turnover of almost four million roubles. Yet as recently as June the store was in trouble with the plan. There was a cash deficit of some 250,000 roubles.

How is it that a very large retail store can be at one with the plan overall, while the line-ups at the entrance are growing?

In the trading hall there is a crush of people, but the rooms where the sets of furniture are displayed are deserted. This is because even the display units have not been on the market for ages and moreover, the sets of ordinary dining room tables that are there won't be offered to you anyway.

"How will you fulfill the plan if you don't have anything to trade?" - I asked the director. Besides myself, there were four other people in the room.

Butkovskii grins, as if from a toothache:

"They instantly buy up everything we receive. And all day long there are scandals."

Standing next to me and having noticeably cooled down after a "confidential chat" with Butkivskii is Kiev resident A.A. Rudenko. A week ago he had acquired a much desired collapsible set of children's wall bars, a product of the Fastovskaya furniture plant, which is just outside Kiev. A friend of his who is a carpenter, assembled the wall bars in exactly a week. And then it was discovered that the colours of the facade surfaces in the set